

# Science in Parks

# The Basis of Resource Stewardship

#### Preserving Our Nation's Heritage

Listen to the wind rustle
through prairies that staged
battles and provided
landscapes of opportunity
for indigenous people and
European settlers. Explore
creeks and rivers that were
the highways of our past.



Native grasses in the wind at Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve.



Early morning fog over the Upper Mississippi River, Effigy Mounds National Monument. NPS Photo by Ken Block.

These landscapes and the plants and animals within them compose our inheritance, our legacy to future generations, and an inspiration to all generations. The National Park Service uses science and scholarship as the basis for resource stewardship, to ensure that the beauty and value of these places will remain unimpaired for this and future generations.

#### Monitoring Trends

At the epicenter of a Civil War battlefield, a small plant battles for survival. The Missouri bladderpod, a species threatened with extinction, grows in open cedar glades at Wilson's Creek National Battlefield. Scientists monitoring the Wilson's Creek population have found that the number of plants has increased since 1997. Managers use this data to evaluate the effectiveness of their management actions in protecting the bladderpod.



Missouri bladderpod (*Lesquerella filiformis*), Wilson's Creek National Battlefield.



Monitoring Missouri bladderpod populations at Wilson's Creek National Battlefield.

# National Park Service scientists determine trends in the condition of park resources. This information provides the basis for sound management decisions that protect our heritage.

### Science for Parks

Vast prairies, oak savannahs, winding rivers, and natural springs were settings for our cultural heritage and now provide solace and inspiration for visitors. They also support a wide variety of plants and animals that depend on diverse habitats for food and shelter.



Monitoring aquatic invertebrates at George Washington Carver National Monument.



Field scientist surveying prairie vegetation at Tallgrass
Prairie National Preserve.

National Park Service scientists systematically identify the plants and animals found in parks and document changes in their numbers and distribution. Park managers use this information to understand park resources under their care.

## Science for Stewardship

Long-term monitoring and groundbreaking research help park managers develop solutions to challenges facing the forests, prairies, rivers and other natural systems in their care. Scientific research also provides learning experiences for people of all backgrounds, allowing visitors to understand the natural processes that occur in our parks. Science is the basis of resource stewardship.



Visitors canoeing on the Upper Jack's Fork in the Ozark National Scenic Riverways.



Monitoring smallmouth bass populations in the Buffalo National River.

